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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/960,433	09/21/2001	Robert M. Dombroski	65501	5547

7590

11/02/2005

Christopher F. Regan
ALLEN, DYER, DOPPELT, MILBRATH & GILCHRIST, P.A.
P.O. Box 3791
Orlando, FL 32802-3791

EXAMINER

CHOI, PETER H

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

DATE MAILED: 11/02/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/960,433

Applicant(s)

DOMBROSKI, ROBERT M.

Examiner

Peter Choi

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 September 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-42 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-42 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 21 September 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>10/9/01</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-29 are pending in the application.

Priority

2. Applicant is awarded the priority filing date of September 21, 2000 and the claims will be examined accordingly.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-10, 13, 16-17, 19, 22-30 32-34, 36, 38-39 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Smith et al. (U.S Patent #5,835,376).

As per claim 1, Smith et al. teaches a system, operable over the public switched telephone network (PSTN) and Internet, for use in providing services to a claimant by a

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service vendor, as scheduled by a scheduler, and paid for by a payor, the system comprising:

(a) a server (**database server 10**) for processing and storing claimant data (**for storing records indicating requested vehicle services and associated information**) and connected to the Internet (**customers may enter data into database server 10 over a telephone connection 15; incoming requests may also be accepted by various other methods, for example, remote facilities may enter information over a radio, or satellite, or Internet; computing systems communicate with database server 10 over a wide-area of Internet network**)

[Column 4, lines 45-47, 56-58, Column 7, lines 3-4; Figure 1]; and

(b) at least one scheduler workstation for scheduling services for a claimant (**customers 14 may also possess remote data entry terminals at which the customers may enter data into database server 10 over a telephone connection 15; incoming requests may also be accepted by various other methods, for example, remote facilities may enter information over a radio, or satellite, or Internet**) [Column 4, lines 45-47, 56-58; Figure 1] and comprising:

(i) a scheduler computer connected to the server for entry of claimant data by the scheduler and display of claimant data to the scheduler (**requests for vehicle service may be entered by call takers at the location of the database server, or may be entered remotely via telephone, either at a data terminal at a customer site or via touch-tone telephone or at an ATM-like facility using a customer identification card**) [Column 3, lines 4-8]; and

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(ii) a telephone interface connected to the PSTN for communication between the scheduler and at least one of the insurer, claimant and service vendor (**call takers 12 receive telephone requests from customers such as customer 13**)

[Column 4, lines 50-52]

As per (c) at least one payor computer for accessing claimant data on said server via the Internet by the payor:

Smith et al. teaches the step of generating and transmitting an electronic invoice for services [Column 21, lines 21-30]. The electronic invoice would inherently be transmitted to the payor using Electronic Data Interchange techniques that are old and well known in the art, further inherently requiring the payor to use a computer to access said electronically transmitted invoice. Thus, Smith et al. meets the limitation of the claim.

As per claim 3, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 1 wherein the services comprise at least one of transportation (**vehicle dispatching**), translation, delivery of durable medical equipment (DME), and delivery of pharmaceuticals [title, abstract].

Claims 16 and 32 recite similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

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As per claim 4, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 1 wherein the services comprise claimant transportation (**scheduling transportation services for requesters**).

Claim 33 recites similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 5, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 1 wherein the server comprises a report generation unit for generating reports (**invoices**) based upon claimant data for the payor (**invoice file 34 containing information for generating an invoice for the activities performed by vehicles 20 upon customer request; billing information associated with requested transportation services**) [Column 3, lines 16-17, Column 7, lines 37-46, Column 21, lines 2-30].

Claims 17 and 34 recite similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 7, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 5 wherein the reports comprise at least one of a transport-by-type report (**output vehicle file 36; Transport Type {Wheelchair/Basic/AdvancedLifeSupport} found on Dispatch File 30**), claimant transport report (**Dispatch File 30**), claimant employer transport report (**Contract number found on Dispatch File 30**), transportation savings report (**Invoice file 34; Base rate codes, Mileage rate codes, Extra services rate codes found on Dispatch File 30**), list of claimants report (**Automated Dispatch Requests File 44;**

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Patient ID number found on Dispatch File 30), transport by county (Pickup Location, Pickup Latitude, Pickup Longitude, Destination Location, Destination Latitude, and Destination Longitude count on Dispatch File 30) and ICD-9 transport report (Transport ID Number, Vehicle ID Number on Dispatch File 30) [Column 7, line 36 – Column 8, line 65, Column 17, lines 9-37; Figure 2, 3].

Claims 22 and 36 recite similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 9, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 1 wherein the server comprises a billing unit for verifying service performed by the service vendor and for generating bills for the payor **(generating an invoice for the activities performed by vehicles 20 upon customer request; invoice files 34 contain detailed information used to generated invoices of the kind needed)** [Column 7, lines 37-40, Column 9, lines 49-67].

Claims 19 and 38 recite similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 10, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 9 wherein the billing unit verifies mileage of transportation provided by the service vendor **(automatically deliver, during vehicle dispatch, the exact route which will be used by Government or insurance agencies in verifying the mileage charges accumulated by the vehicle; automatically perform such verification upon an**

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ambulance service invoice to determine if the mileage charges on the invoice are within parameters set by a Government or insurance agency) [Column 18, lines 36-56].

Claim 39 recites similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 13, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 1 wherein the service vendors comprise transportation services, and the service vendors comprise at least one of independent transportation providers, taxi companies, and ambulatory companies **(methods and apparatus described could be used for any kind of vehicles, including taxis, ambulances, shipping traffic by land {semitrailers}, sea {freighters}, or air {cargo planes}, ground vehicles and airplanes at airport facilities and on the airport tarmac) [Column 25, lines 37-51].**

Claim 42 recites similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 23, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 22 wherein the transport-by-type report **(output vehicle file 36; Transport Type {Wheelchair/Basic/AdvancedLifeSupport} found on Dispatch File 30)** summarizes claimant data for all claimants of the payor based upon transport mode, mileage, cost and average cost **(invoice record is generated by transferring various fields from the dispatch record, such as billing information, services provided and base,**

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mileage and extra service rates; invoice file 34 contains detailed information used to generate detailed invoices of the kind needed) [Figures 2 and 3; Column 7, line 36 – Column 8, line 65, Column 21, lines 4 – 30].

As per claim 24, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 22 wherein the claimant transport report (**Dispatch File 30**) summarizes claimant data for a single claimant based upon transports taken, cost and mileage (**transport ID number, transport type, base rate codes, mileage rate codes, extra services rate codes, billing address codes on Dispatch File 30; invoice record is generated by transferring various fields from the dispatch record, such as billing information, services provided and base, mileage and extra service rates; invoice file 34 contains detailed information used to generate detailed invoices of the kind needed)** [Figures 2 and 3; Column 7, line 36 – Column 8, line 65, Column 21, lines 4 – 30].

As per claim 25, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 22 wherein the claimant employers transport report (**Contract number found on Dispatch File 30**) summarizes cost of services (**invoice record is generated by transferring various fields from the dispatch record, such as billing information, services provided and base, mileage and extra service rates; invoice file 34 contains detailed information used to generate detailed invoices of the kind needed)** for an employer

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of at least one claimant [Figures 2 and 3; Column 7, line 36 – Column 8, line 65, Column 21, lines 4 – 30].

As per claim 26, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 22 wherein the transportation savings report (**Invoice file 34; Base rate codes, Mileage rate codes, Extra services rate codes found on Dispatch File 30**) summarizes mileage cost savings for the payor (**invoice record is generated by transferring various fields from the dispatch record, such as billing information, services provided and base, mileage and extra service rates; invoice file 34 contains detailed information used to generate detailed invoices of the kind needed**) [Figures 2 and 3; Column 7, line 36 – Column 8, line 65, Column 21, lines 4 – 30].

As per claim 27, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 22 wherein the list of claimants report (**Automated Dispatch Requests File 44; Patient ID number found on Dispatch File 30**) lists all claimant's names, identification numbers, addresses, phone numbers, and employment information (**patient's name and phone number; pickup and destination city, street address, state and zip code**) for the payor [Figures 2 and 3; Column 7, line 36 – Column 8, line 65, Column 17, lines 11-22, Column 21, lines 4 – 30].

As per claim 28, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 22 wherein the transport by county report (**Pickup Location, Pickup Latitude, Pickup Longitude,**

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Destination Location, Destination Latitude, Destination Longitude count and Mileage rate codes on Dispatch File 30) summarizes the cost of providing services within each county (invoice record is generated by transferring various fields from the dispatch record, such as billing information, services provided and base, mileage and extra service rates {mileage rate multiplied by number of miles serviced}); invoice file 34 contains detailed information used to generate detailed invoices of the kind needed) that at least one claimant resides for the payor [Figures 2 and 3; Column 7, line 36 – Column 8, line 65, Column 21, lines 4 – 30].

As per claim 29, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 22 wherein the ICD-9 transport report (**Transport ID Number, Vehicle ID Number of Dispatch File 30)** summarizes the cost of providing services based upon a diagnosis of claimants of the payor [Figures 2 and 3; Column 7, line 36 – Column 8, line 65, Column 21, lines 4 – 30].

The reports in claims 23-29 are found in the non-functional descriptive material and are not functionally involved in the steps recited nor does it alter the recited structural elements. The recited system steps would be performed the same regardless of the spreadsheet document. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the reports and report contents. Thus, the reports will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, *see In re Gulack, 703 F.2d*

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1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); In re Lowry, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP § 2106.

As per claim 30, Smith et al. teaches a system, operable over the public switched telephone network (PSTN) and Internet, for use in providing services to a claimant by a service vendor, as scheduled by a scheduler, and paid for by a payor, the system comprising:

(a) processing and storing claimant data on a server connected to the Internet [see analysis of claim 1(a)]; and

(b) scheduling services for a claimant via at least one scheduler workstation which comprises [see analysis of claim 1(b)] and comprising:

(i) a scheduler computer connected to the server for entry of claimant data by the scheduler and display of claimant data to the scheduler [see analysis of claim 1(b)(i)]; and

(ii) a telephone interface connected to the PSTN for communication between the scheduler and at least one of the payor, claimant and service vendor [see analysis of claim 1(b)(ii)]; and

(c) providing access by the payor to claimant data on the server via the Internet and at least one payor computer [see analysis of claim 1(c)].

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

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5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 2, 6, 8, 11-12, 14-15, 18, 20-21, 31, 35, 37, and 40-41 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith et al. (U.S Patent #5,835,376).

As per claim 2, Smith et al. does not explicitly teach a system according to claim 1 wherein the payor is a workers compensation insurer and the claimant is a workers compensation claimant.

Smith et al. does not expressly teach the identify of the payor or claimant (as a workers compensation insurer and claimant) as recited in claim 2; however, this difference is only found in the non-functional descriptive material and is not functionally involved in the steps recited nor does it alter the recited structural elements. The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the identify of the payor and claimant. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the identity of the payor and claimant. Thus, the spreadsheet document will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, *see In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); *MPEP* § 2106.

Furthermore, Official Notice is taken that it is common knowledge that users requiring ambulatory services may have incurred injuries on the job and will file a claim with their workers compensation insurer for payment of ambulatory services. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the teachings of Smith et al. to include the step of obtaining the identify of the payor and claimant, because the resulting combination will enable service providers to bill the payor and/or claimant according to any payment package that may be a result of a previously agreed upon arrangement (such as discounted mileage rates, surcharges, etc.).

Claims 15 and 31 recite similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 6, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 5 wherein the reports **(invoice record)** are downloadable **(generated and transmitted, leading to electronic payment)** by the payor on a payor computer **(another alternative is that the invoice records might be transmitted to customer sites)** [Column 21, lines 21-30].

Official Notice is taken that providing customers with an itemized invoice of billable charges is an old and well-known practice in the business arts. It is old and well known in the art that spreadsheets are used to monitor incurred expenses; thus, it

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would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the teachings of Smith et al. to include the step of providing downloadable reports into a spreadsheet document, because the resulting invention would provide customers with the raw data needed to maintain their expenditure records, and to perform their own Ad Hoc queries and calculations relating to the expenses incurred.

Smith et al. does not expressly teach the spreadsheet document as recited in claim 6; however, this difference is only found in the non-functional descriptive material and is not functionally involved in the steps recited nor does it alter the recited structural elements. The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the spreadsheet document. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the spreadsheet document. Thus, the spreadsheet document will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP § 2106.

Claims 18, 21, and 35 recite similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 8, Smith et al. does not explicitly teach a system according to claim 1 wherein the server comprises a payor secure online ordering unit for the entry and review of claimant data via the payor computer.

Smith et al. does teach the step of generating and transmitting an electronic invoice for services {via the Internet}, leading to electronic payment, inherently allowing the payor to use a computer to view the billable charges.

Official Notice is taken that it is old and well known in the computing arts to provide a security measures for exchanges of sensitive information online. Access to information can be restricted using a plurality of means that are old and well known in the art, including password authentication, limiting access to users on the Intranet or users having proper security clearance, Internet security (HTTPS, SSL) protocols, etc. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the teachings of Smith et al. to include a secure online ordering unit because the resulting combination would prevent unauthorized users from tampering with sensitive financial information, confidential information (account numbers, etc.).

Claim 37 recites similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 11, Smith et al. teaches a system according to claim 9 wherein the billing unit generates an estimated service bill **(generate electronic invoice; invoice record is generated by transferring various fields from the dispatch record, such as billing information, services provided and base, mileage and extra service rates; invoice file 34 contains detailed information used to generate detailed**

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invoices of the kind needed) [Column 7, lines 36-45, Column 9, line 49 – Column 10, line 10, Column 21, lines 4 – 30; Figure 3].

Smith et al. does not explicitly teach the step of auditing a vendor bill from the service vendor by comparing the vendor bill with the estimated service bill. However, Official Notice is taken that it is old and well known in the insurance arts to assign a claims adjuster and/or case manager to cases involving ambulatory services and hospitalization.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the teachings of Smith et al. to include the step of auditing a service and vendor bill because the resulting invention would enable claims adjusters and/or case managers to review the service and vendor bills to verify accuracy of billed charges and to reconcile any discrepancies between the bills.

Claim 40 recites similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 12, Smith et al. does not explicitly teach a system according to claim 11 wherein the billing unit generates a variation report including a request to contact the service vendor based upon the audit.

However, Official Notice is taken that it is common practice for payors to request to contact the service provider to discuss any discrepancies found when auditing billing invoice reports or to address any questions the payor may have. Furthermore, it is old and well known in the business arts that billing invoices include contact information that the payor may call for questions regarding their bill. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings of Smith et al. to include the step of generating variation reports including requests to contact service vendors, because the resulting invention would provide payors a means of communicating a desire to address any questions they may have, and errors or discrepancies found.

Claim 41 recites similar limitations; therefore, the same rejection applies.

As per claim 14, Smith et al. teaches a system, operable over the public switched telephone network (PSTN) and Internet, for use in providing services to insurance claimants by service vendors, as scheduled by a scheduler, and paid for by insurers, the services including at least one of transportation, translation, delivery of durable medical equipment (DME) and delivery of pharmaceuticals [see analysis of claim 3], the system comprising:

(a) a server for processing and storing claimant data and connected to the Internet [see analysis of claim 1(a)]; and

(b) at least one scheduler workstation for scheduling services for a claimant [see analysis of claim 1(b)] and comprising:

(i) a scheduler computer connected to the server for entry of claimant data by the scheduler and display of claimant data to the scheduler [see analysis of claim 1(b)(i)]; and

(ii) a telephone interface connected to the PSTN for communication between the scheduler and at least one of the insurer, claimant and service vendor [see analysis of claim 1(b)(ii)];

(c) the server comprising an insurer secure online ordering unit for permitting the entry and review of claimant data via the Internet and an insurer computer [see analysis of claim 8; further the payor may be an insurer].

As per claim 20, Smith et al. teaches a system, operable over the public switched telephone network (PSTN) and Internet, for use in providing services to insurance claimants by service vendors, as scheduled by a scheduler, and paid for by insurers, the services comprising at least one of transportation, translation, delivery of durable medical equipment (DME), and delivery of pharmaceuticals [see analysis of claim 3], the system comprising:

(a) a server for processing and storing claimant data and connected to the Internet [see analysis of claim 1(a)], the server comprising a report generation unit for generating reports based upon claimant data [see analysis of claim 5]; and

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(b) at least one scheduler workstation for scheduling services for a claimant [see analysis of claim 1(b)] and comprising:

(i) a scheduler computer connected to the server for entry of claimant data by the scheduler and display of claimant data to the scheduler [see analysis of claim 1(b)(i)]; and

(ii) a telephone interface connected to the PSTN for communication between the scheduler and at least one of the insurer, claimant and service vendor [see analysis of claim 1(b)(ii)];

As per (c) at least one insurer computer for accessing claimant data on said server via the Internet by at least one of a claim adjuster and a case manager for the insurer:

Smith et al. teaches the step of generating and transmitting an electronic invoice for services [Column 21, lines 21-30]. The electronic invoice would inherently be transmitted to the insurer (designated as the payor for the case) using Electronic Data Interchange techniques that are old and well known in the art, further inherently requiring the insurer to use a computer to access said electronically transmitted invoice. Thus, Smith et al. meets the limitation of the claim.

Official Notice is taken that a claim adjuster and case manager are assigned by insurer to process filed insurance claims. It is old and well known in the insurance arts

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that the function of claims adjusters is to investigate claims made against companies to detect fraud, and assess property loss or damages and attempts to effect out-of-court settlements with claimants. It is old and well known in the insurance arts that the function of case managers is to coordinate and facilitate access to timely and appropriate health care services by acting as an advisor, advocate, and mentor throughout recovery and return to work.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the teachings of Smith et al. to include the step of enabling claims adjusters and case managers to access claimant data and reports, because the resulting invention would provide claims adjusters and case managers access to the information they need to timely and appropriately assess damages and claim forms and other records to determine insurance coverage and also to provide health care services by acting as an advisor, advocate, and mentor throughout recovery in cases requiring ambulatory services and hospitalization

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Ur (U.S Patent #6,615,046) teaches a method for automatically dispatching mobile services. A connection is established over a cellular network between a client and one of a plurality of mobile providers of a service. A database is maintained comprising a plurality of mobile providers of the service. A communication from the client is received requesting the service, and a suitable provider is automatically selected, responsive to the communication and to the parameters in the database, including proximity to the customer.

Gaspard II (U.S Patent #6,240,362) teaches a method of scheduling a vehicle in real-time to transport freight and passengers. Transportation requests are received over a communications network from a freight terminal and/or a passenger terminal, which are interconnected through an Internet Service Provider over a network.

Patel (U.S Patent #5,953,706) teaches a transportation network system which integrates communications and data transmission requirements for ground transportation service providers into a single, centrally controlled network. Communications networks (such as the Internet and the World Wide Web) are used as the data distribution backbone between the various service providers.

Jones et al. (U.S Patent #6,117,073) teaches an integrated emergency medical transportation database system. Billing information can be submitted electronically through a wireless LAN, cellular network, or dedicated or dialup phone line in an

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appropriate format which reduces the accounts receivables times for each patient encounter. A statistical database is used to store and extract statistical information from data entered during patient encounters.

Smith et al. (U.S Patent #6,430,496) teaches a system for controlling vehicles to provide transportation services. A database stores records each documenting needed transportation services.

Sisley et al. (U.S Patent #5,467,268) teaches a system for assigning and scheduling resource requests to resource providers that use a modified "best-first" search technique that combines optimization, artificial intelligence, and constraint-processing to arrive at near-optimal assignment and scheduling solutions.

Vance et al. (U.S Patent #6,442,526) teaches a system for corporate travel planning and management. The system comprises a Travel Planning module, and Travel Expense Reporting module. Travel Expense Reporting module receives trip and card data and expense policy data from the corporate database. The Travel Expense Reporting module also sends expense detail data and summary expense totals to the corporate database. Travelers can request a list of preferred rental car vendors.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Peter Choi whose telephone number is (571) 272 6971. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

PC

October 28, 2005

Peter Choi
Examiner
Art Unit 3623

Susanna Diaz
SUSANNA M. DIAZ
PRIMARY EXAMINER
AU 3623